

/1104 cont./

763 that he might strangle the dying one in order to release him from  
764 the death agony (p. 944). Loud, shrill cries announce the end to  
the neighborhood, and people arrive without delay. I myself wit-  
nessed the two cases just described.

761 Fatal accidents are not uncommon. A whole family may  
766 be taken if a canoe capsizes. A few men drag the body of a per-  
son who has drowned or fallen from a rock into his hut if it is not  
too far away. Otherwise, if the men are far from their families  
on a common hunt, they bury the victim then and there and  
hasten to bring the news quickly to the family.

763 The demonstrations of mourning begin while a person is  
152 dying and immediately afterwards. All the neighbors assemble in  
front of the hut of the deceased or inside and start a loud, irregu-  
lar moaning. Copious tears flow from grief and sincere sympathy.  
Everyone is again vividly reminded of Watajin who has taken  
this person away. As was learned earlier from Bridges (x):104:  
"When a person is very ill and likely to die, great grief is shown,  
and the near relatives keep near, so as to act as mourners at the  
decease of the sick. They show much grief, and when the sick  
actually dies great lamentation is made, and the mourners weep  
profusely" (cited in English).

### 3. The Burial

764 There is a remarkable number of reports, most of them brief,  
114 however, about the way our Fungians treat the corpse. The dying  
one has scarcely ceased breathing when the persons present bury  
themselves over him. As Bove (x):118 says, this time accurately:  
"They wrap the body of the deceased, which is still almost warm  
in a few rags." They use large pieces of leather and nowadays also  
wraps of rucking. Usually they leave the body in the position it  
assumed at death. The entire death is lashed and tied with  
strips of leather which are tightly wrapped around it in various di-  
rections (43). This happens in any case; "the dead are always

43. Hyden (p.275 says briefly that "the  
body is wrapped in some old skin of otter  
or seal; it is then buried"; Levinson

/1106 cont./

764 bound with cord, is dragged out of the hut by a few men from among the close relatives. They take it to the nearest thicket or into the nearby woods. Here they lay it on a low bushy shrub with spreading branches. Smoldering sticks are pushed into the shrub and dry logs leaned against it. They fan it rapidly with leafy twigs, and in a few minutes the flames leap up. Usually after a short time the burned bush collapses. Then the burning corpse is covered with greater quantities of wood. The men alone do this first part, while the girls and women are obliged to fetch firewood incessantly and to keep the fire burning brightly until all the bones have been destroyed beyond recognition. Coarse sand or earth from the forest floor is dragged to the place with sticks or oars and scattered over the remaining small heap of ashes of the extinguished pyre. Finally the spot is covered with brush and fallen branches. After a few months it no longer is discernible. While this is going on, other people from the neighboring hut stand around the fire, watch the procedure, weep loudly, and sing their tlaywala. A cremation does not take place on the open beach because the traces of it could not be quickly and completely eradicated. The corpse was laid upon a strong, thick shrub because igniting it is much easier than kindling a fire on the ever-damp forest floor.

766 Even in regions where cremation was preferred over burial, the body of a child was customarily buried in the ground. I was told: One man alone took this corpse and carried it into the forest where he quickly made a shallow hole in the ground and covered the body with earth and brush. This work was easy and not troublesome; the grave only required scratching away a bit of loose forest earth with a stick. Bridges (MM:III, 119:1869) also emphasizes that, in contrast to the burning of adult bodies, "young children are frequently buried" /cited in English/.

764 As all such cremations it was an absolute rule that the mourners left the spot only after the large bones of the corpse /1107/ had crumbled to fine dust in the strong heat and the scene of the fire had been made unrecognizable. They continued their weeping in the huts until far into the night. It is noteworthy, and contrary to the general conception of the Yamana, that every man and woman who helped in any way at the cremation received a gift [43] from the relatives of the deceased. This was by no means something that had belonged to the deceased, as a memento, for

/1109 cont./

764 who knows about it avoids it out of anxious fear. Other people, not the nearest relatives, accompany or assist the men who bury the corpse. When they have finished their work, they quietly and unobtrusively rejoin those who have gathered in a hut and are loudly mourning.

766 As has been said, as soon as death occurs, immediate preparations for burial are made unless one must await the coming dawn because of the darkness of the night. In exceptional cases the body is interred in a small cave nearby or in the cavity of a rock if there is earth or gravel available to cover it. Even in our day the corpse has been destroyed in the hut fire. If, for instance, a married couple were all alone in some spot and the husband died, and other people, although notified by the customary triple smoke signal, could not get there quickly because of high waves, the surviving wife would be obliged to make the best of it. Without any special preparation of the corpse, she would drag it into the hut fire and pile brush and firewood on top of it. Soon the flames would leap so high that the hut itself would catch fire. The woman would keep the fire going until the corpse was completely destroyed. The same thing was done if the path into the forest was blocked or the customary burial in the ground was in any way prevented. The concern of the survivors is always to do away with the corpse without delay, and even a person by himself is able to do that.

764 Among the Yamana, just as among the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 552), it has been customary from ancient times to destroy all the  
768 possessions of the deceased, by consigning them to the flames, throwing them into the sea, or placing the individual pieces in the grave with the corpse. Bridges (a):206 confirms that the deceased's "property is either cast into the sea or burned" /cited in English/, and Bove (e):159 adds: "In the grave of a man, they bury pieces of harpoons, spears, slings, etc., and with a woman, nets and fishing gear." These things are in no way meant as actual burial accessories; the survivors are guided solely by the desire to destroy in one way or another everything that belonged to the deceased. That is why it is a matter of course for them "to burn the hut of the deceased, which was his last abode, and to leave the area for some time," to repeat Bove's (e):159 words.

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Hyades (p):335 and (q):379 interprets this custom erroneously: "The heir divides among the friends of the deceased what belonged to the latter, as though the nearest relatives did not wish to draw any kind of profit from the death of one of them" /translated from French/. The idea of bequeathing the possessions of a deceased person to others is unfamiliar to our Fuegians. Rather, they emphasize that only the owner personally has a right to them, and therefore the belongings of anyone who has departed this life must be destroyed. BD:127 gives čiyellāra, /1111/ "to give away things specially those left by the dead, as a sign of sorrow for the dead, as near relatives were expected to do to those who were not connected by kin with the dead" /cited in English/. This statement, which in part is inaccurate, is valid only to the extent I have just indicated; I refer to the meaning of čiyellāra, which I obtained from present-day Yamana.

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All the Indians are especially brisk in dealing with the corpse of a yēkamui; almost without exception it is burned. His tools and utensils are placed upon the fire from the start, and while the flames are consuming everything, the people present also toss in all kinds of things that they happen to have at hand, such as small baskets, ornaments, tools, and so forth. They want to show their esteem for the yēkamui and also that they are ruthlessly depriving themselves of even their own indispensable utensils and implements.

### 3. Minor Manifestations of Sorrow

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Since our Fuegians do not know anything about the fate of souls after death and regard the separation from them as a state that will last forever, each death causes them untold sorrow. This is so sincere and so deeply felt that in this respect they surpass many Europeans. Not everyone who has traveled through those regions has had an opportunity to convince himself of this, since our Indians conceal their grief from strangers. I was a witness to it several times and can also rely on corresponding reports of missionaries. Bove (e):159, who does not even mention that he personally observed a funeral, nevertheless, and perhaps for that very reason, speaks of their "indifference toward the dead. The cries they utter, the way

/1111 cont./

752 they beat themselves, the destruction of the huts in which the deceased breathed his last are reflections of custom more than true expressions of grief." Nevertheless, he admits that "there really are persons who feel the loss very deeply." All doubt is removed by the conduct of parents whose child has been torn from them by death. Now and then they actually behave as though they had taken leave of their senses. According to Hyades (g):30 the "loss of children is in general deeply felt and often the French [of the Mission Scientifique] saw the features of the savages cloud over and the women even burst into weeping and lamentation if there happened to be a reference to such a death." Spegazzini's (a): 168 observation alone shows what every Fuegian mother goes through when she must part from the lifeless body of her child (51).

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766 51. He writes: "I have seen a young woman whose child had died take the corpse and go to the woods where the little body, cleaned and curiously painted, after having been pressed to her bosom several times, was wrapped in fox skins and enclosed in a framework of twigs, which she immediately buried under the leaves of a tree. Upon leaving she cast a look at the place where her little one was, one of those looks that would require a whole book to be explained and whose meaning could be appreciated only by a mother similarly stricken" /translated from Spanish/. Before that Fitz-Roy (a):179 had learned: "Matthews sometimes heard a great howling, or lamentation, about sun-rise in the morning; and upon asking Jemmy Button what occasioned this outcry, he could obtain no satisfactory answer; the boy only saying, 'people very sad, cry very much.' Upon one occasion when some canoes were alongside the 'Beagle,' a sudden howl from one of the Fuegians aroused several others who were near, and at the opposite side of the vessel, when a general howl of lamentation took place, which

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was ended by a low growling noise. By this, as well as by pulling their hair, and beating their breasts, while tears streamed down their faces, they evinced their sorrow for the fate of some friends who had perished, some days before the 'Beagle's' arrival, by the upsetting of a loaded canoe" /cited in English/.

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Parents in particular /1112/ lose control of themselves and make loud and bitter accusations against Wataninawa, insult him, and swear revenge against him (p. 988). Sorrow breaks through unrestrained among these unspoiled children of nature. The first utterance always exceeds all bounds, but the grief continues to be deeply felt for months and years and sometimes flares up in its initial violence. "The mourning lasts long, sometimes for two years, but it gradually becomes less, till the memory of the dead passes from the mind" /cited in English/ (Bridges [a]:206).

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While the dying person is still struggling with death, his nearest relatives are already weeping and howling. The strongest outburst of their grief begins after life has departed. Loud, shrill cries are uttered at short intervals, and it seems as though each one is intended to surpass the other. Mixed in with them are unrestrained howling and groaning by other persons. A loud and indescribable confusion of voices fills the little hut. The longer it lasts, the more neighbors hasten there, and none stays away. Everyone squats on the ground, and sometimes they sit pressed so closely together that they can scarcely move. Once I even saw them remove the hut fire because of lack of room. Everyone present wants to be as close to the body as possible, at least to be inside the hut. Long hours are filled with whimpering and sighing, howling and lamenting. While this is going on, a few men begin wrapping the corpse in pieces of leather. While it is being dragged out of the hut, the howling reaches its loudest and wildest pitch. The behavior of the persons present clearly shows their feeling that the deceased is now departing forever. They writhe with pain, throw themselves on the ground and get up again, wave their arms about wildly and full of despair, and clutch one another as though they would tear each other apart. This continues

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## d. Characteristics of the Medicine-Man System

4756 The preceding description definitely shows that the yŋkamuf occupies a unique position among the Yamana. The medicine man is more or less feared, no matter how much help he gives his family group. Since he does, after all, attempt at times to bring considerable harm and death to other fellow-tribesmen, whether on his own initiative or at the request of a friend, /1434/ he is remote from the frequently recommended virtue of universal helpfulness. The privileged position which is granted him on some occasions is at variance with the equality that is generally conceded the members of the tribe. As a result, every yŋkamuf is exaggeratedly anxious about his personal honor, as is shown in the stories about the medicine man (p. 1366 /untranslated/). Linked with this is selfishness which is strictly prohibited in the everyday life of our Yamana. If a yŋkamuf has cast his eye on a beautiful, capable woman, she will marry him even though she has little desire to do so. She is governed by the consideration that he could do her serious harm if she refused. The special feather decoration, apawŋra, a unique body painting, and the hŋma-yŋkamuf, are reserved exclusively for the yŋkamuf. If several medicine men are sitting together in a group, other people, especially children, must be particularly respectful and quiet, so that the medicine men are not disturbed. Often a yŋkamuf will seize the spirit of the person who comes near him. It is advisable, therefore, to pass in front of him, not behind him, so that one can observe his attitude. If someone is obliged to pass him when his back is turned, he should do this very slowly and cautiously. The medicine men do not trust one another. A person who takes a piece of meat or a swallow of water should first remove the "harm" which an enemy has possibly put into it, or he will become ill. Hence he makes certain movements, as though he were scooping out the "evil"; he places it on his open palm and blows it far away.

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 4766 The corpse of a medicine man is given careful treatment. Soon after his demise he is painted in the manner peculiar to him and decorated with the apawŋra (p. 1049); he is also painted red all over (p. 1110). His material possessions are placed beside him

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and the hut is set on fire (341). The many people who have

341. Despard (b):717 maintains: "When yaccomosh dies, his body is burned to ashes, and those ashes thrown to the winds he rules so mightily, for them to make sport withal" /cited in English/. The last part of this statement is incorrect.

assembled throw all kinds of objects into the fire, whatever they can lay their hands on. They do this in honor of the deceased (p. 1046). Since in recent times even medicine men are buried, the people see to it that his face is turned upward. The community of souls of all deceased yékamuſ and of people who have drowned is regarded as the actual ülulufjāla. This term, which also has a general meaning (p. 1042), is related to ülūuf in BD:91. These souls move toward the east where they dwell (342). At

342. Bridges (i):19 writes that "shooting stars were spoken of as the dead wizards of their people" /cited in English/. I did not encounter this belief. It is well known that the Solk'nam regard shooting stars as the "play of the medicine men" (Vol. I, 680).

night they sometimes return to their homes and every living medicine man can see them. Nelly Lawrence said in all seriousness: "Since our kēpif like to travel to the east when we dream at night or are dreamily brooding during the day, the yékamuſ must ring /1435/ and soon bring back the kēpif, or they would be lost in that distant region where the kēpif of dead yékamuſ actually dwell." All this shows the unique position of the medicine men, even though they cannot be noticeably distinguished from their countrymen in everyday life, but conform to tribal tradition as true Yamana.

If one examines the meaning and nature of the medicine-man system, its uniqueness becomes apparent. It does not correspond either to the natural disposition of our Yamana or to the